

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce

§ 10.130

cases except as provided in § 10.10(c) and (d).

[50 FR 5172, Feb. 6, 1985, as amended at 54 FR 6520, Feb. 13, 1989]

§ 10.102 Statements concerning officials.

(a) A practitioner shall not knowingly make false statements of fact concerning the qualifications of a candidate for election or appointment to a judicial office or to a position in the Office.

(b) A practitioner shall not knowingly make false accusations against a judge, other adjudicatory officer, or employee of the Office.

§ 10.103 Practitioner candidate for judicial office.

A practitioner who is a candidate for judicial office shall comply with applicable provisions of law.

§§ 10.104–10.109 [Reserved]

§ 10.110 Canon 9.

A practitioner should avoid even the appearance of professional impropriety.

§ 10.111 Avoiding even the appearance of impropriety.

(a) A practitioner shall not accept private employment in a matter upon the merits of which he or she has acted in a judicial capacity.

(b) A practitioner shall not accept private employment in a matter in which he or she had personal responsibility while a public employee.

(c) A practitioner shall not state or imply that the practitioner is able to influence improperly or upon irrelevant grounds any tribunal, legislative body, or public official.

§ 10.112 Preserving identity of funds and property of client.

(a) All funds of clients paid to a practitioner or a practitioner's firm, other than advances for costs and expenses, shall be deposited in one or more identifiable bank accounts maintained in the United States or, in the case of a practitioner having an office in a foreign country or registered under § 11.6(c), in the United States or the foreign country.

(b) No funds belonging to the practitioner or the practitioner's firm shall be deposited in the bank accounts required by paragraph (a) of this section except as follows:

(1) Funds reasonably sufficient to pay bank charges may be deposited therein.

(2) Funds belonging in part to a client and in part presently or potentially to the practitioner or the practitioner's firm must be deposited therein, but the portion belonging to the practitioner or the practitioner's firm may be withdrawn when due unless the right of the practitioner or the practitioner's firm to receive it is disputed by the client, in which event the disputed portion shall not be withdrawn until the dispute is finally resolved.

(c) A practitioner shall:

(1) Promptly notify a client of the receipt of the client's funds, securities, or other properties.

(2) Identify and label securities and properties of a client promptly upon receipt and place them in a safe deposit box or other place of safekeeping as soon as practicable.

(3) Maintain complete records of all funds, securities, and other properties of a client coming into the possession of the practitioner and render appropriate accounts to the client regarding the funds, securities, or other properties.

(4) Promptly pay or deliver to the client as requested by a client the funds, securities, or other properties in the possession of the practitioner which the client is entitled to receive.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0651-0017)

[50 FR 5172, Feb. 6, 1985, as amended at 70 FR 56129, Sept. 26, 2005]

§§ 10.113–10.129 [Reserved]

INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

§ 10.130 Reprimand, suspension or exclusion.

(a) The Commissioner may, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, (1) reprimand or (2) suspend or exclude, either generally or in any particular case, any individual, attorney, or agent

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shown to be incompetent or disreputable, who is guilty of gross misconduct, or who violates a Disciplinary Rule.

(b) Petitions to disqualify a practitioner in *ex parte* or *inter partes* cases in the Office are not governed by §§ 10.130 through 10.170 and will be handled on a case-by-case basis under such conditions as the Commissioner deems appropriate.

§ 10.131 Investigations.

(a) The Director is authorized to investigate possible violations of Disciplinary Rules by practitioners. See § 10.2(b)(2).

(b) Practitioners shall report and reveal to the Director any knowledge or evidence required by § 10.24. A practitioner shall cooperate with the Director in connection with any investigation under paragraph (a) of this section and with officials of the Office in connection with any disciplinary proceeding instituted under § 10.132(b).

(c) Any non-practitioner possessing knowledge or information concerning a violation of a Disciplinary Rule by a practitioner may report the violation to the Director. The Director may require that the report be presented in the form of an affidavit.

§ 10.132 Initiating a disciplinary proceeding; reference to an administrative law judge.

(a) If after conducting an investigation under § 10.131(a) the Director is of the opinion that a practitioner has violated a Disciplinary Rule, the Director shall, after complying where necessary with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 558(c), call a meeting of the Committee on Discipline. The Committee on Discipline shall then determine as specified in § 10.4(b) whether a disciplinary proceeding shall be instituted under paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) If the Committee on Discipline determines that probable cause exists to believe that a practitioner has violated a Disciplinary Rule, the Director shall institute a disciplinary proceeding by filing a complaint under § 10.134. The complaint shall be filed in the Office of the Director. A disciplinary proceeding may result in:

(1) A reprimand, or

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(2) Suspension or exclusion of a practitioner from practice before the Office.

(c) Upon the filing of a complaint under § 10.134, the Commissioner will refer the disciplinary proceeding to an administrative law judge.

§ 10.133 Conference between Director and practitioner; resignation.

(a) *General.* The Director may confer with a practitioner concerning possible violations by the practitioner of a Disciplinary Rule whether or not a disciplinary proceeding has been instituted.

(b) *Resignation.* Any practitioner who is the subject of an investigation under § 10.131 or against whom a complaint has been filed under § 10.134 may resign from practice before the Office only by submitting with the Director an affidavit stating his or her desire to resign.

(c) If filed prior to the date set by the administrative law judge for a hearing, the affidavit shall state that:

(1) The resignation is freely and voluntarily proffered;

(2) The practitioner is not acting under duress or coercion from the Office;

(3) The practitioner is fully aware of the implications of filing the resignation;

(4) The practitioner is aware (i) of a pending investigation or (ii) of charges arising from the complaint alleging that he or she is guilty of a violation of the Patent and Trademark Office Code of Professional Responsibility, the nature of which shall be set forth by the practitioner to the satisfaction of the Director;

(5) The practitioner acknowledges that, if and when he or she applies for reinstatement under § 10.160, the Director will conclusively presume, for the limited purpose of determining the application for reinstatement, that:

(i) The facts upon which the complaint is based are true and

(ii) The practitioner could not have successfully defended himself or herself against (A) charges predicated on the violation under investigation or (B) charges set out in the complaint filed against the practitioner.